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GOVERNORS

March 5, 2007

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein and Senator Cornyn,

We are writing to thank you for your leadership in working to assure that Department of Homeland Security (DHS) counterterrorism grant programs recognize the homeland security needs of the United States. Any effective strategy to secure our nation must apply risk-based analyses to manage the threat from terrorism. We believe that the Homeland Security FORWARD Funding Act of 2007 will provide much needed changes to these programs by better recognizing the risks and vulnerabilities faced by larger states such as California, New York, Florida, and Texas.

We support the efforts of your bill to build a coordinated and comprehensive system to maximize the use of federal resources and to provide clear lines of authority and communication. Your bill will further the efforts of DHS, cities, counties and state agencies as they continue to work together to detect, deter and respond to terrorism. Specifically, we appreciate the following provisions of the bill:

- Follows the 9/11 Commission Report recommendation to better allocate federal resources based on vulnerabilities;
- Analyzes risks, threats, vulnerability, and consequences related to potential terrorist attacks; current programs do not give full consideration to our states' urban population centers, numerous critical infrastructure assets, hundreds of miles of coastland, maritime ports, and large international borders;
- Reduces the "small state" minimum from 0.75% to 0.25%, providing each state a baseline award while allocating an increased level of funds based on risk; the current base + per capita method allocates a disproportionate share of funds to states with small populations;
- Continues the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program and exempts the program from the base percentage, allocating all funds based on risk;
- Maintains the Emergency Management Performance Grant program as a separate program focused on capacity building for all-hazards preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation;
- Continues the central role of states, building on existing systems that effectively coordinate planning efforts and ensure accountability;
- Allows for limited regional applications from previously-designated UASI cities or other urban areas with at least a population of at least 500,000;

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- Retains the central role of states as the administrative agent for the grants to ensure regional applications are consistent with statewide plans; and
- Recognizes the importance of national standards for evaluating the "essential capabilities" needed by state and local governments to respond to threats.

Your continued support for improving the nation's ability to detect and deter and coordinate responses to terrorist events is appreciated.

Sincerely,



Arnold Schwarzenegger

Eliot Spitzer



Charlie Crist



Rick Perry